



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

News Release

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UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR ARRESTED ON INTERNET CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES

FRESNO – A professor employed at a Christian university in Fresno will make his initial appearance in federal court tomorrow to answer to charges of possession and distribution of child pornography over the Internet.

William Cockerham, 60, was taken into custody this morning by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents following a search of his Fresno home and a subsequent search of his office at Fresno Pacific University.

Cockerham has been under investigation by both ICE and the Fresno Police Department since February 2004, when police detectives served a state search warrant at Cockerham's residence and seized several computers. A forensic examination of those computers seized during that search by the Fresno Police Department and the Fresno County Sheriff's Department revealed evidence that Cockerham had used his Internet service to download and e-mail pornography across state lines. According to court documents, Cockerham admitted back in 2004, that he had visited chat rooms, and had downloaded, sent, and received sexually explicit photographs of minors – including images of girls as young as eight.

"Those who engage in the exploitation of children should no longer expect the anonymity of cyberspace to protect them," said Brian Poulsen, the acting resident agent-in-charge for ICE investigations in Fresno. "This case is particularly troubling because of the suspect's position as someone that young people at the university look up to and respect."

If convicted on both charges, Cockerham faces a mandatory minimum sentence of five years and a statutory maximum penalty of 20 years in prison.

Cockerham's arrest is part of ICE's Operation Predator, an ongoing ICE enforcement initiative to identify, investigate, arrest and, in the case of foreign nationals, deport child sex predators. Since the initiative began in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 6,800 individuals nationwide, including more than 1,700 in California.

ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators. Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.